

BRASS

Starring

CARROLL O'CONNOR

Written By

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Sept 19, 1984

"BRASS"

ACT ONE

FADE IN

EXT. THE HUDSON RIVER IN THE FIFTIES. DAY

It is raining and a tugboat sounds from off the water. The early morning river traffic is sparse. Camera pans the shore and comes to rest on an open pier roof that is used for parking. A slow zoom brings us to the roof itself.

INT. VAN -POV-THRU WINDSHIELD

The wipers are beating a steady rhythm as the van drives up the entrance ramp. It stops at the office gate and the driver's hand extends out the rolled down window to accept the parking ticket. As the window is rolled up, the van is steered onto the roof and finds a parking space. We still have not seen the driver. But his hands now shift down and bring the car to a halt. The wipers are turned off and the rain fills the windshield, forming a curtain between the inside of the van and the outside world. The driver's hands unlock the glove compartment and remove a revolver which is now laid on the seat beside him. His hands rub the mist off the inside of the glass and we now see that he has a view of the ramp so that he can watch all arriving cars.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE NOLAN'S BROWNSTONE - MORNING

A CU of a car's tires splashing a puddle as it comes to a rest.

MED SHOT

Rosa Garcia emerges from the driver's seat. A trim and attractive young woman, her energetic and vivacious latin temperament is only kept under control by her respect for authority and especially for Frank Nolan who, in a sense, is the father she can't remember. Moving quickly across the sidewalk she hurries up the steps. An angle from the doorway lets us see West 94th Street and the old, established New York that the buildings represent.

INT. LIVING ROOM.

Finishing his coffee, Frank Nolan enters a bright, contemporary room with fine art and good taste. An attractive man, his thirty years in the Department are easily carried. In a light blue shirt with dark blue tie and a well tailored light gray suit,

CONT:

there is a rough hewn urbanity that comes, not from a Park Avenue upbringing, but from a life that has seen much and missed every little. As he puts on his jacket we see it has a specially sewn in holster into which he now places his revolver. He catches a glimpse of himself in a mirror, straightens his tie collar and now glances at his watch. He'd better hurry. Mrs Valdez, the housekeeper, a woman of seventy hurries in with Nolan's three star uniform. Her english should be better after twenty five years in this country.

MRS VALDES

I make it all smooth. Aqui. Try.

She starts removing his jacket and helping him on with the uniform.

NOLAN

Mrs Valdes darling, I'm late.

MRS VALDES

Maybe I move button.

NOLAN

Don't move anything. It's perfect.

The bell sounds. Nolan is glad of the interruption.

NOLAN

Better open the door for Rosa. The poor kid'll be half drowned.

MRS VALDES

Wait. I come back.

She goes into the hall and Nolan takes off the uniform jacket and replaces it with his suit jacket. He puts the uniform over his arm and starts for the hall.

THE HALL

Mrs Valdes has just told Rosa she likes her new hairstyle.

ROSA

You really like it?

MRS VALDES

Bonita. Now I see your face.
The men are crazy, they don't marry you.

ROSA

Well, at least you and I know it.

CONT:

MRS VALDES

They don't see a good woman. Not like Senor Nolan. He and my Consuela..they really love. You marry like that..you have happy life.

ROSA

And how is Chief Nolan today? In a good mood, I hope.

As Mrs Valdes sees him entering..she indicates he is getting heavy.

MRS VALDES

Y su saco esta ajustado.

NOLAN

I heard that. And if I am getting heavy, it's those dinners you keep pushing on me.

(to Rosa)

She thinks I'm a growing boy.

MRS VALDES

I move the button.

She reaches for the uniform jacket but he protects it.

NOLAN

(to Rosa)

Tell her how I look in my uniform.

ROSA

Traffic's in a mess this morning. If you're going to get to the ceremony...

Nolan reaches for an umbrella and shields the uniform on his arm.

NOLAN

That's what I like. A direct answer. You'll make a good commissioner.

MRS VALDES

You be good to Rosa.

NOLAN

(to Rosa)

What've you been telling her?

ROSA

Just women's talk.

MRS VALDES

Why you make her carry gun?

NOLAN

Make her! She waited in line all night to become a cop.

(to Rosa)

When are you going to explain it to her?

ROSA

(innocently)

She doesn't speak good english.

NOLAN

No? You should've heard her thirty years ago. If my wife didn't interpret for me, I wouldn't have even known her name.

He opens the front door

MRS VALDES

He tell story. Consuela teach me english and now...I learn from him.

NOLAN

She's the Spanish Eliza Doolittle.

(to Mrs Valdes)

Hasta la vista, mia querida.

ROSA

(touched)

Chief, that's nice.

MRS VALDES

You come home for dinner?

NOLAN

I'll call.

(to Rosa, as he starts out)

She's as bad as a wife.

He is out the door.

MRS VALDES

(to Rosa)

You watch him.

(slight beat)

I lose Consuela. Not him.

EXT. NOLAN'S CAR IN TRAFFIC - MORNING

INT: THE CAR

Nolan is seated next to Rosa, his bag alongside him and papers on his lap...as he works. The radio supplies an intermittent chatter in b.g.

ROSA

A man who takes money and talks is a rat.

CONT:

NOLAN

That's true.

ROSA

The worst.

NOLAN

Beneath contempt.

Thinks she has him.

ROSA

So how come you believe what the bum says?

NOLAN

Because I trust the detective. Not the informant.

He initials a paper and glances at his watch.

NOLAN(cont)

The Commissioner likes an audience when he swears in people. Like at eight sharp.

ROSA

You'll be there.

(slight beat)

You read his book?

NOLAN(innocently)

The P.C. wrote a book?

ROSA(impatiently)

Not him. The new Deputy. Bradley Oates.

NOLAN

What's the title? "I Walk On Water?"

He reacts to the paper in the pile.

NOLAN(cont)

You won't listen, will you. I told you that Kew Gardens killing was a robbery that went bad. The hundred and ninth picked him up.

ROSA(stubbornly)

Well, it looked like a contract homicide.

NOLAN

No self respecting hit man robs his victim. It shows a lack of class.

(The next file surprises him)

"Request for Transfer." Detective Rosa Garcia?

(looks up)

What is this? A joke?

EXT. PIER PARKING

A nondescript car makes its way up the ramp and shows the guard a parking permit.

INT. THE VAN-POV-THRU WINDSHIELD

The rain has stopped and the off camera killer watches the newly arrived car take its place in a parking spot. He opens the door of the van. Later, we will learn his name. Stack.

MED SHOT

as camera follows behind the killer. As the woman is locking her car, he throws an arm around her and puts a gun to her. He begins pulling her toward the van. She struggles and screams.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Several people from other cars are in various parts of the huge roof.

FIRST MAN

Hey, let her alone!

He approaches the killer and his victim as two other men also react.

SECOND MAN

Get your hands off her.

AN OLDER WOMAN DRIVER

Police! Call the police!

The killer strikes his victim and stunned, she slumps to the ground. He fires at the nearest man and misses. The latter, startled, begins to flee, as do the two other witnesses.

INTERCUTS

as he runs after each new victim in and out between the cars, finally managing to shoot each in the head. Having silenced these three and failing to see another male witness who has prostrated himself behind a car, he hurries back to his original victim and drags her into his van. As it speeds away down the ramp...

EXT. NOLAN'S CAR

On a West Side street heading downtown.

INT. THE CAR

CONT:

NOLAN

Seven thousand detectives for me to worry about and all you can think of is yourself. Rosa,, you know how many people are dying for your job? Why you could you could write your book on what you hear in this car. Make Bradley Oates look like an amateur.

ROSA

All that happens on this job is I get carsick..

NOLAN

Don't I ask your advice?

ROSA

On what?

RADIO

Eighteen John..respond to Pier 94...parking lot ...54th Street and Twelfth Avenue..signal ten ten.. report of shots fired.

CAR 18J

Car eighteen John responding.

CAR 18M

Eighteen Mary responding.

NOLAN

Lots of things. Talking to you is like taking a poll. I know what every detective in the Bureau is thinking.

ROSA

That's just the point. I am a detective..not a chauffeur. I feel like you're protecting me.

NOLAN

You're a great shot...you know karate. You're protecting me.

ROSA

I went to Personnel. They said you have to approve it.

NOLAN

I can't believe you're doing this. Did you tell your boyfriend?

ROSA

How can I? He works all day and you told him to go to Brooklyn College at night.

NOLAN

Why not? That's what I did.

CONT:

CAR 18J

Car eighteen John. Is there an ambulance responding? We have multiple injuries from gunshot wounds.....three people on the ground.....have sergeant ten eighty five this location.

Both are listening.

RCSA

They've got a problem.

CAR 18J

Have Crime Scene Unit respond.

ROSA

Want to check it out?

She looks out at street.

NOLAN

I thought you'd never ask; let's go.

As she hesitates..

ROSA

What about the swearing in ceremony?

NOLAN

(smiling)

I'll blame it on you.

EXT. THE CAR

as she attaches the roof light and the klaxon sounds. She accelerates.

EXT PIER PARKING LOT

Blue and whites are present and others arriving. The crime scene is being guarded as the Crime Scene Unit station wagon and pulls up. Its officers disgorge and begin their methodical routine of evidence gathering. The local squad detectives are examining the bodies. Lt Joe Hanley, the squad commander, a slim, no nonsense detective, is running the show.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Nolan's car pulls up away from the action. He gets out and studies the scene. Now he locates the bodies and moves in that direction.

POV-BODIES

Looking up at Nolan as he stares down impassively. We see Rosa approaching. She hesitates, for just a second, and then positions herself so as to view the killings.

MED SHOT

He glances at her and then starts toward Hanley who moves to meet him. They confer quietly for a moment. As they walk across the lot, Nolan is recognized as he passes and he nods to the detectives he knows. The patrolmen salute him.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Men of the Crime Scene Unit are at work dusting the woman victim's car. Rosa moves over to observe.

YOUNG CRIME SCENE MAN

(noticing Nolan)

Keep your head down. They brought up the heavy artillery.

OLDER CRIME SCENE MAN

What's your problem?

YOUNG CRIME SCENE MAN

I'm too young to die.

OLDER CRIME SCENE MAN

(indicating a clean spot on the car)

You missed something already. Take it easy. Nolan always visits the troops. Moral support.

YOUNG CRIME SCENE MAN

I don't want to be noticed. Not yet.

ROSA

Relax, Tiger. You'd probably look great back in uniform.

As she moves off..

ROSA(cont)

How you doin', Eddie?

OLDER CRIME SCENE MAN

Not bad, Rosa.

(to his colleague)

The Chief's driver.

The younger man bends to his task.

MEDIUM SHOT

as Hanley questions the witness who had hidden behind a car. Nolan is on the edge of the observing detectives. For now, he is content to let his professionals do their job.

HANLEY

We appreciate your help, Mr Whitman.
But if there's anything else you
can remember...

WHITMAN

I couldn't believe it was happening.
I got sick.

They wait.

WHITMAN(cont)

All I saw was those poor people running
away and screaming....and that maniac
chasing them and shooting.

(the nightmare)

It could've been me.

HANLEY

Would you know the man if you saw
him again?

WHITMAN

(hesitates)

I'm..I'm not sure.

(defensively)

But I did see the van.

HANLEY

Yes sir. We've got an alarm out.

He glances questioningly at Nolan who has nothing to ask.

HANLEY(cont)

We can take you home now, if you
like.

WHITMAN

It's all right. I can drive.

HANLEY

I'm sorry but we can't release any
of the cars yet. We're still searching
for evidence.

(to a Detective)

Give Mr Whitman a lift.

(hands Whitman a card)

If you think of anything else...

CONT:

As Whitman turns to leave, a sudden, worried thought.

WHITMAN

Maybe he did see me.

NOLAN

If he had, you and Lieutenant Hanley
wouldn't be holding this conversation.

Whitman looks at Nolan and is somewhat assured. He nods assent
and accompanies the detective to a car.

NOLAN

You're going to need help, Joe.
Three people executed..probably a
fourth. We'll take a lot of heat.

HANLEY

We've got a good make on the van.

NOLAN

I want a task force down here.
Captain Jacobs'll be in charge.
He's got the people.
(turns to leave then..)
The guy is crazy, Joe. We all need help.

HANLEY

No problem, Chief.

NOLAN

I didn't expect any.

Camera follows Nolan as he makes his way thru the murder scene,
forming a picture of the events. He stops for a moment and
observes the Crime Scene Unit making photos of the tire marks
left by the van's sudden acceleration. As he starts off,
something attracts his attention.

A NEW ANGLE

It is a uniformed cop leaning his butt against the fender of one
of the involved cars. The cop fails to see Nolan come up.

NOLAN

(pleasantly)

Why don't you sit on it so we
can get a really good print.

The startled cop jumps up and salutes.

COP

Yes sir. Excuse me, Chief.

CONT:

 to NOLAN
And try not/fall asleep. Please?
It might help your career.

NOLAN'S CAR

as he comes up.

 ROSA
The office called. The P.C. is
looking for us.

 NOLAN
 (irritated)
Mr. Bradley Oates must be offended.
Turning a magazine writer into a
deputy commissioner. Why don't
they call him what he is. A damn
press agent! This case isn't
trouble enough. Now we'll have
that clown messing around.

He yanks open the car door.

 NOLAN(cont)
You got enough gas?

 ROSA
I filled it up this morning.

 NOLAN
I can't buy a break.

As he is about to get in, a blue and white brakes near him and
Assistant Chief Pat Maldonato sticks his head out the window.

 MALDONATO
Frank! Wait a minute!

Nolan turns as Maldonato gets out of his car and crosses to
him. He is in charge of Manhattan's uniformed men and wears his two star
uniform. He is God's angry man.

 MALDONATO(cont)
Figured you'd be here.

 NOLAN
You should've been a detective, Pat.

 MALDONATO
Give me a third star...I'll be any-
thing.